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Akahata:

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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, October 14

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 16, 2007

Spent the day at private residence in Nozawa.

Prime Minister's schedule, October 15

07:55

Met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Iwaki at the Kantei.

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09:01

Upper House Budget Committee meeting.

11:58

Returned to the Kantei.

13:00

Upper House Budget Committee meeting.

17:01

LDP executive meeting.

17:35

Met with Foreign Ministry Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau Director General Okuda at the Kantei.

18:10

Met with Cambodian National Assembly President Hen Samrin.

19:55

Returned to private residence.

4) Poll: 39 PERCENT for, 44 PERCENT against continuing MSDF mission in Indian Ocean

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
October 16, 2007

The Asahi Shimbun conducted a telephone-based nationwide public opinion survey on Oct. 13-14, asking respondents if they support the government's plan to continue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's activities in the Indian Ocean. In response to this question, 39 PERCENT answered "yes," with 44 PERCENT saying "no." The proportion of affirmative answers increased somewhat from 35 PERCENT in a previous survey taken Sept. 13 in the wake of former Prime Minister Abe's clarification of his resignation. However, negative answers still outnumbered affirmative ones.

The government will introduce a new legislative measure to the Diet in order for Japan to continue the MSDF's activities in the Indian Ocean. The newly planned legislation is to replace the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which is currently in effect (but is to run out on Nov. 1.). In the survey, respondents were also asked if they supported the new legislation. To this question, affirmative answers accounted for only 28 PERCENT, with negative ones at 48 PERCENT.

Meanwhile, the approval rating for the Fukuda cabinet was 47 PERCENT, somewhat down from its inaugural 53 PERCENT rating. The disapproval rating was 30 PERCENT (27 PERCENT in the last survey). Respondents were further asked when they thought the House of Representatives should be dissolved for a general election. In the breakdown of answers to this question, the proportion of those who

think the Diet's lower chamber should be dissolved early decreased substantially from 50 PERCENT in the Sept. 13 survey to 32 PERCENT in the survey this time. The proportion of those who think there is no need to hurry increased from 43 PERCENT to 60 PERCENT .

Asked about the desirable form of government, public opinion was split, with 33 PERCENT choosing a coalition government led by the Liberal Democratic Party and 32 PERCENT preferring a coalition government led by the Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto). In the

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Sept. 13 survey, 41 PERCENT chose an LDP-led coalition, with 33 PERCENT opting for a DPJ-led coalition.

5) Government sets one-year time limit for new antiterrorism legislation, reflecting LDP's consideration to New Komeito

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
October 16, 2007

The government and the ruling coalition decided yesterday to set a one-year time limit for new legislation designed to extend the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. The government had outlined a bill with a two-year time limit and presented it to the opposition camp. But the New Komeito insisted that the law be limited to one year to ensure civilian control of the Self-Defense Force (SDF). Giving consideration to its ruling coalition partner's opinion, the Liberal Democratic Party decided to change the time limit. With an eye on the next House of Representatives election, the New Komeito aimed to play up its presence. It also intends to make more requests on the new legislation.

In a press conference yesterday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura implied that the government changed its draft bill out of consideration to the New Komeito' view. He said: "In the ruling coalition, there is a view calling for the term of validity to be set at one year to ensure civilian control. The government decided to take this view into account." A senior New Komeito member commented: "The one-year time limit will be desirable in terms of ensuring civilian control."

Under the new legislation unveiled yesterday, the law would be effective for one year. The MSDF would supply fuel only to warships engaged in maritime intercept operations aimed to prevent the movement of terrorists or weapons in the Indian Ocean and not to aircraft carriers that may be involved in attacks in Iraq or Afghanistan.

With a two-year time limit, the government's original draft required reporting the contents of SDF operations one year later, instead of incorporating a provision for Diet approval.

However, the New Komeito expressed discontent with the exclusion of the requirement for Diet approval. It insisted that the term of validity be limited to one year and a vote be taken in the Diet every year in order to ensure civilian control.

6) Diet interpellations

TOKYO (Page 7) (Abridged)
October 16, 2007

The following is a gist of questions and answers in a meeting yesterday of the House of Councillors Budget Committee.

Refueling activities

Akio Sato (Liberal Democratic Party): The Maritime Self-Defense Force has been tasked with refueling in the Indian Ocean. Do you think this is against the Constitution?

Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba: The government has set up noncombat

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areas to avoid using armed force. It's inconceivable to conflict with Article 9 of the Constitution. I want the Democratic Party of Japan to state its definition of collective self-defense. If they are going to send out the Self-Defense Forces to participate in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), they should talk about the SDF's competence to use weapons and the equipment it would carry.

Sato: What's your view of UN-centered diplomacy?

Ishiba: (Some contend that) if there's a United Nations resolution, it's alright to use armed force. This kind of view is inconsistent with the government's view. If Japan accepts the use of armed force in Northeast Asia, it will obviously help the United States, not the United Nations.

Sato: What about the new legislation to continue the MSDF's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean?

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura: Japan cannot stay away from the war on terror. That's a basic premise. The new law will be the Diet's current approval itself. The Diet's deliberation on the legislation is tantamount to its approval.

Sato: There are questions about which operation the fuel provided by Japan was used for. Do you think it's difficult to confirm that?

Ishiba: No country will disclose everything about military intelligence. However, the United States discloses as much information as possible. It's the government's responsibility to come up with materials for discussions. We're making our utmost efforts to disclose information.

7) Gen Nakatani criticizes DPJ for its opposition to MSDF refueling operations, saying, "Only terrorists are opposing refueling activities"

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
October 16, 2007

Referring to the Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ or Minshuto) opposition to continuation of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling operations in the Indian Ocean, Gen Nakatani, former Defense Agency director general and chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Research Commission on Security, during a Fuji-TV talk show yesterday said, "The MSDF operation is highly praised by the international community. Only terrorists are opposing the operations."

The DPJ yesterday was strongly offended by this comment. Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka told a press conference that "Nakatani's comment was tantamount to saying that those who do not support the refueling operation are all terrorists. There are many in the LDP who call themselves security specialists. I feel this is a very dangerous trend."

Mitsuru Sakurai also took up this remark at an Upper House Budget Committee meeting. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda was busy tamping down the repercussions of Nakatani's remark, saying, "I believe he made that remark as an analogy, but it was not appropriate."

8) Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura irritated by Diet deliberations

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on new refueling bill not moving forward as planned

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
October 16, 2007

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura has been saying frequently that it is "frustrating" that Diet deliberations on the continued refueling operation in the Indian Ocean have yet to move forward. Although the government and ruling coalition considered the budget committee meetings of the two houses of the Diet to be prior consultations on the new refueling bill, the main opposition

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) pursued at those sessions the alleged diversion of fuel provided by the Maritime Self-Defense Force for use in the Iraq operation.

Machimura stated at a press conference yesterday:

"We presented our outline of the bill and hoped to discuss it at the Lower House Budget Committee. It is regrettable that debate on the contents of the bill was not conducted. I hope that positive discussion will be carried out in the (Upper House)."

Since last week, he has been saying: "Frankly speaking, I am not satisfied with Diet debate."

With prior consultations in mind, the government presented the DPJ the outline of the new bill, but the DPJ is unlikely to agree to hold prior consultations.

9) Japan's ISAF participation limited to civilian assistance only:
Ozawa

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
October 16, 2007

Ichiro Ozawa, president of the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto), has advocated participating in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. In this regard, Ozawa clarified his view yesterday, limiting Japan's ISAF participation to civilian assistance like food aid. In response, the DPJ will incorporate ISAF participation in its counterproposal to the ruling coalition's new antiterror legislation. However, Ozawa has yet to show his view of how to involve the Self-Defense Forces in civilian assistance. The DPJ is going to discuss it from now on.

Ozawa met with Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo) President Tsuyoshi Takagi yesterday. "They take it as if I'm saying the

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Self-Defense Forces will participate in combat operations," Ozawa said in his meeting with Takagi. "But," Ozawa went on, "Japan is probably not expected to go so far as to do so." He added, "I'm saying there are a lot of things to do in civilian areas." Specifically, Ozawa cited food aid to the Afghan people.

Ozawa, writing for a monthly magazine that hit store shelves on Oct. 9, advocated sending SDF members to participate in ISAF after the DPJ takes the reins of government. His article about the SDF's involvement in ISAF drew objections from within his party. Meanwhile, the DPJ has been forming a united front in the Diet with the Japanese Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party (Shaminto). The JCP and the SDP, however, are both critical of Ozawa's advocacy, with SDP President Mizuho Fukushima calling it

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"unconstitutional." Ozawa is believed to have aimed at dodging the proliferation of objections by clarifying his view that restricts Japan's ISAF participation to civilian assistance.

Ozawa's advocacy of Japan's ISAF participation has also affected his party in its making of a counterproposal to the government's new antiterror legislation. "We will work out (bare bones for the DPJ's counterproposal) in a few days about Japan's role in ISAF," DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama said yesterday.

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10) DPJ mulling counterproposal with focus on food aid: Ozawa also attaches importance to assistance for human needs

NIKKEI (Page 3) (Full)
October 16, 2007

As a proposal countering the government and ruling camp-sponsored new legislation intended to continue Japan's refueling operations, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) plans to compile

assistance measures with focus on food aid to Afghanistan led by non-governmental organizations. It will undertake coordination to compile its plan as a bill.

The DPJ is considering food aid drawing funds from the official development assistance (ODA) budget. Commenting on this counterproposal, Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama in a speech given yesterday noted, "We want to finalize our ideas around the time the government adopts its bill at a cabinet meeting. I think it would be best if we compile our proposals into a bill."

However, some party members are opposing President Ichiro Ozawa's call for active participation in peace operations involving the use of armed force led by the United Nations, such as participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

Taking this situation into account, Ozawa is gradually shifting emphasis to assistance for basic human needs.

When Tsuyoshi Takagi, chairman of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation, asked Ozawa at the DPJ headquarters yesterday, "You are saying that Japan should take part in battles involving the use of armed force. What is your view on participation the ISAF?", Ozawa replied, "No countries in the world would expect Japan in terms of armed force. There are many other things Japan can contribute to the nation, including food aid."

11) Japan, North Korea agree to hold working group session this month

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 16, 2007

Japanese and North Korean officials in charge of negotiations on normalizing bilateral ties met in Shenyang, China, on Oct. 14. In the meeting, both sides agreed to hold later this month the next session of the working group on normalizing ties as part of the six-party talks, according to informed sources. They also agreed to accelerate the discussion by holding a working-group session several times, if necessary, by the end of this year. However, on the key issue for Japan of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea, no progress was made in the meeting.

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Attending the meeting were Foreign Ministry North and East Asian Division head Shigeo Yamada and Ambassador of North Korea for Normalization Talks with Japan Song Il Ho. Yamada returned to Japan yesterday.

A senior Foreign Ministry official said yesterday: "There was no major breakthrough." According to this official, an agreement is unlikely to be reached in the next working-group session, and in order to produce results, it will be necessary to hold several meetings by the end of the year. Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi stated in a press conference: "We are willing to hold talks with North Korea in any form if they contribute to resolving (bilateral pending issues)."

Thinking of Kuala Lumpur as the site for the next session, Japan will carry out coordination with countries concerned.

According to sources involved in the meeting on the 14th, Japan insisted that Pyongyang return Japanese abduction victims to Japan at an early date and clear up the details of the issue. Meanwhile, North Korea renewed its call for resolving the issue of "settling past accounts." Both reconfirmed the need for accelerating talks to normalize bilateral diplomatic relations. On the issues of abductions and past accounts, a senior government official remarked: "In the meeting, both sides tried to probe into the other side's readiness to move the issue forward."

12) Yen loans worth 1 billion yen to be extended to Cambodia: Prime minister meets with National Assembly president

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Slightly abridged)

October 16, 2007

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda yesterday met with Cambodian National Assembly President Hen Samrin at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). He conveyed a plan to extend new yen loans worth 1 billion yen to Cambodia as a measure to reduce poverty. Fukuda at the same time sought further consolidation of that nation's investment environment to promote investment by Japanese companies.

Fukuda made that request in response to the president's comment, "I hope relations between Japan and Cambodia will develop in the economic field, such as investment and tourism," which he made after expressing gratitude for Japan's official development assistance.

13) Senior Vice Foreign Minister to leave for Tehran

MAINICHI (Page 5 (Full))
October 16, 2007

Regarding the incident of Satoshi Nakamura (23), a senior at Yokonama National University, being kidnapped by an armed group while traveling in southeast Iran, Senior Vice Foreign Minister Itsunori Onodera, head of the Foreign Ministry Emergency Measures Headquarters, will leave for Tehran in order to find a breakthrough in the matter. He will stay in Tehran until the 19th and meet with key government officials and security officials to ask them to secure Nakamura's safety and settle the case at an early date.

14) Idea of Lower House dissolution through discussions surfaces in ruling and opposition camps; "Election could be held next April," says DPJ secretary-general

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NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 16, 2007

There is a rumor in the ruling and opposition parties that the House of Representatives will be dissolved "through discussions" next April after the compilation of the budget for fiscal 2008. Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary-General Yukio Hatoyama stated in a speech in Tokyo yesterday:

"I think around April would be the most likely timing for a dissolution of the Lower House. It is possible that compiling the budget would be considered as a condition for (Lower House dissolution) in discussions."

In the government and ruling coalition, the idea of dissolving the Lower House thorough discussions has been talked about. However, it was the first time for a DPJ executive to talk about it. The possibility is that calls for a general election after the Lower House is dissolved in April will likely become stronger.

Asked by reporters last night about Hatoyama's remarks, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda responded:

"I don't feel like talking about it now. What we should do first is pass the bill (to enable the Maritime Self-Defense Force to continue its refueling operation). I'm not thinking about the timing of a dissolution of the Lower House."

During the presidential campaign for the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Fukuda said: "If we can share awareness of the issues, there will be negotiations with the opposition camp."

The opposition camp traded places with the ruling coalition in the July House of Councillors election. The DPJ is expected to oppose the key bills backed by its victory in the latest Upper House election. Therefore, the present situation is that major bills, except for the FY 2008 budget, will unlikely clear the Diet. Many in the government and ruling bloc are gradually thinking that it will be unavoidable to dissolve the Lower House to call a general election after the budget is approved.

15) Refueling issue takes center stage in Upper House Budget

Committee deliberations; DPJ threatens ruling camp with summoning witnesses and invoking investigative powers, setting off confusion

NIKKEI (Page 3) (Abridged slightly)
October 16, 2007

Deliberations started yesterday at the House of Councillors Budget Committee in the divided Diet. Focused on the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean, the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto or DPJ) has begun threatening the ruling camp with summoning witnesses to the Diet and exercising the right to investigate state affairs. The DPJ is visibly split over the hard-line approach, however. The ruling parties have no winning hand to play, either. The trends of public opinion are likely to sway the future course of the standoff between the ruling and opposition camps.

DPJ Diet Affairs Committee Chair Kenji Yamaoka in a press conference yesterday again referred to the Defense Ministry's correction this

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past September of the amount of oil provided to a US oiler in 2003, saying, "We want to know who is really responsible for the matter as soon as possible." He also revealed the DPJ's plan to summon former Vice Administrative Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya and an administrative official responsible for the matter to the Diet to testify before the Upper House Budget Committee and other venues.

Given its majority in the Upper House, it is possible for the opposition bloc to decide to summon witnesses to the Diet, invoke the right to investigate state affairs, and adopt a censure motion in the upper chamber. Many in the DPJ think the party should use such cards actively. Appearing on an NHK talk show on Oct. 14, DPJ shadow foreign minister Yoshio Hachiro called for Diet testimony by Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, who was chief cabinet secretary in 2003.

Attention is specifically focused on the allegation that oil provided by the MSDF was diverted for use in the Iraq war. Yamaoka referred to the possibility of the Upper House exercising its investigative powers in order to examine operational actions taken by the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk and the Aegis destroyer USS Paul Hamilton that received oil directly or indirectly from the MSDF.

Such a hard-line approach is popular among Lower House DPJ lawmakers, including Yamaoka. At the same time, the overheated debate yesterday set off confusion in the DPJ Upper House. Upper House Budget Committee principal director Mitsuru Sakurai after the committee meeting told the press corps about summoning Moriya and others: "(The Upper House) does not know yet what the problem is."

The Upper House customarily decides unanimously on such matters as summoning witnesses to the Diet and invoking investigative powers. Yamaoka said: "Is it proper to decided on a vital state matter based only on an agreement between the ruling and opposition blocs, (as before)?" But a senior Upper House Diet Affairs Committee officer grumbled: "The procedural requirements would be extremely high, so things would not be that easy." A budget committee member also voiced displeasure with the DPJ Lower House caucus.

Cautious views are also heard in the DPJ Lower House caucus. Summoning witnesses and exercising investigative powers might result in a censure motion against the prime minister, depending on how things turn out. The adoption of a censure motion might be followed by a Lower House dissolution for a snap general election. Pessimism is simmering in the party that the hard-line policy course alone is not enough to keep attracting voters.

With an eye on discord in the DPJ, the government and ruling parties are trying to turn the tables. In the Upper House Budget Committee session yesterday, Liberal Democratic Party member Akio Sato asked for the government's view on DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa's proposal for joining the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. In response, Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba blasted Ozawa, saying, "It is not appropriate politically to call for taking

part in the ISAF without thoroughly discussing the guidelines for weapons use."

SCHIEFFER